



Director of  
Central  
Intelligence

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OCPAS/CIG

CY# 273

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# National Intelligence Daily

*Saturday*  
*18 December 1982*

~~Top Secret~~

CPAS NID 82-294JX

18 December 1982

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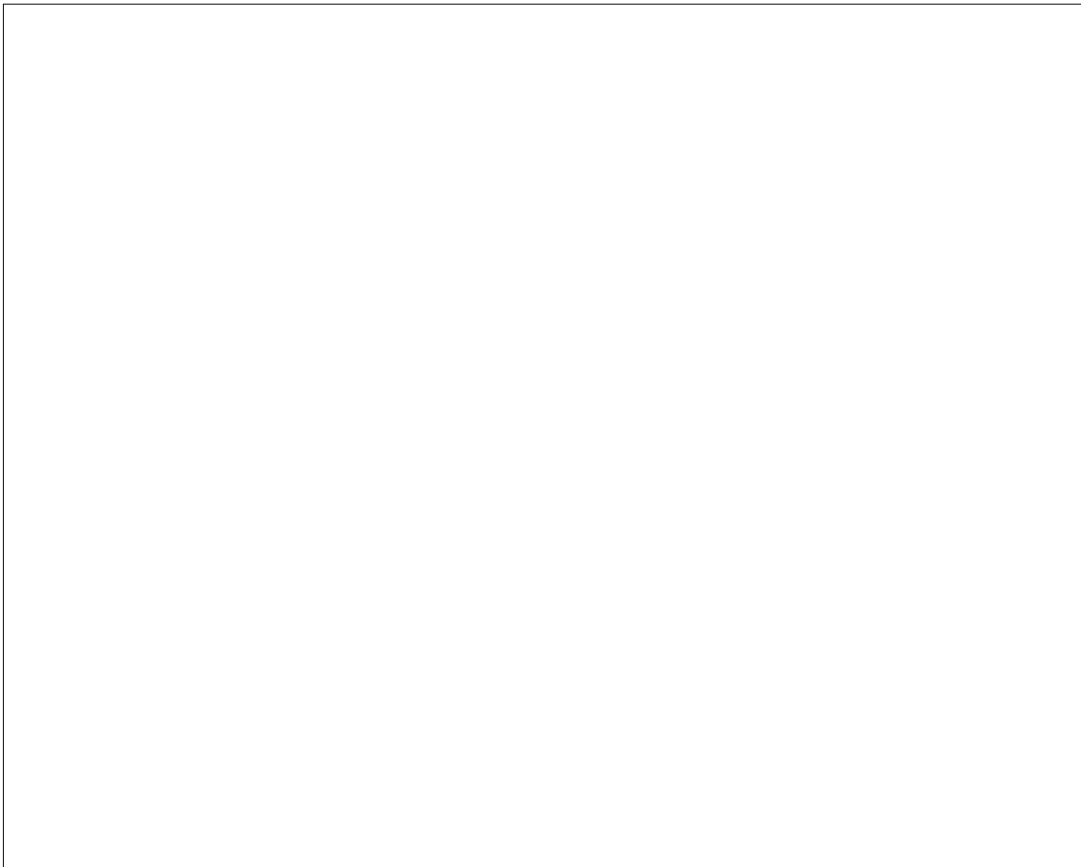
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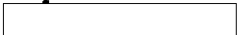
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Special Analysis

14 NATO: *Assessing the Zero Option* . . . . . 10



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Special Analysis(14) NATO: Assessing the Zero Option

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Members of NATO this month reaffirmed their support for the agreed "zero option" negotiating strategy, which proposes not to deploy any of the 572 US INF missiles scheduled for deployment if the Soviets will dismantle their existing INF missiles aimed at Western Europe. Some Allies, however, believe it is important for the US to demonstrate more flexibility at the talks in Geneva to help develop public support for missile deployments in late 1983. Although the West Europeans will continue to resist any hasty abandonment of the zero option, over the next year they almost certainly will put increasing pressure on the US to consider other negotiating positions. [redacted]

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The Allies greeted the zero option with enthusiasm in November 1981. They believed that it would put the Soviets on the defensive at Geneva and show that Moscow is not serious about arms control. [redacted]

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As the time for NATO INF deployments approaches, however, there has been considerable reporting in the press that Allied officials question whether firm adherence to the zero option may not have outlived its usefulness in the negotiations. The press speculates that Allied leaders are wondering whether more flexibility might not help in dealing with Soviet claims next year that the USSR is being reasonable while the US is still holding to its opening position. [redacted]

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Probable West German Position

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The Soviets are likely to focus their propaganda concerning INF on West Germany to influence the election there in March. They hope to increase pressure on the Social Democratic Party in particular to back away from the zero option. Senior party officials have welcomed a proposal calling on the US to seek only a partial

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reduction of SS-20s and the destruction of older Soviet INF missiles in exchange for cancellation of NATO's INF deployments. [redacted]

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6 If INF becomes a major election issue, the government under Chancellor Kohl may believe it has to demonstrate its independence from US policy on some aspects of INF deployments. It might feel vulnerable to charges that it has not pushed the US to reach an agreement at Geneva. Bonn probably will urge the US to make some show of flexibility while adhering to the substance of the zero option at least until after the elections. [redacted]

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7 West German officials say that they do not expect the Soviets to make serious attempts to reach an agreement in Geneva until West Germany appears more certain to deploy Pershing IIs. After the election--especially if the INF issue were believed to have reduced the vote for the Christian Democrats--Bonn might urge the US even more strongly to consider solutions other than the elimination of all Soviet and US INF missiles. [redacted]

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5-7 Defense Minister Woerner stated this fall that INF negotiations with the USSR could continue after initial Pershing II deployments in December 1983. Solutions other than the zero option might appear particularly attractive if they promised reductions in deployments for both sides and helped ease the impact of massive demonstrations and acts of civil disobedience. [redacted]

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### Other Allies

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6 At a press conference following the NATO Defense Ministers' meeting earlier this month, British Defense Secretary Nott stressed that, while the zero option would be the optimum solution at Geneva, the UK is prepared to consider all reasonable Soviet proposals. His statement may be another indication of growing nervousness among British officials about the effect of INF deployments on the UK's next national elections, which have to be held

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by the spring of 1984. Labor Party deputy leader Healy has already endorsed moving away from the zero option and including British and French nuclear systems in the Geneva talks. [redacted]

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French President Mitterrand, in a interview published this week, reportedly said that an acceptable agreement at Geneva would inevitably lead to a solution somewhere between the zero option and the current Soviet position. Foreign Minister Cheysson says that Mitterrand's comments had been misunderstood and that France continues to support the US negotiating position as a "starting point."

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10 The French are concerned about the impact of the INF debate on West Germany's commitment to NATO. If they conclude that strict adherence to the zero option would jeopardize West German deployment, they probably would advocate changing the negotiating strategy to ensure deployments. Paris would continue to insist, however, that its nuclear systems not be included in such an agreement. [redacted]

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7 Other Allies almost certainly would accept an INF agreement falling short of the zero option. Dutch Prime Minister Lubbers has suggested that a reduction in the number of missiles slated for the Netherlands--where support for INF modernization is weakest--could improve deployment prospects. [redacted]

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7 Allied governments do not want NATO's dual policy on arms control and modernization to unravel, and they would not want to give the impression that they are deviating from agreed strategy. They would welcome full consideration in NATO of reductions short of zero and would prefer a strong public stand that does not suggest a capitulation to Soviet threats. [redacted]

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7 The Allies will want any reductions in NATO INF totals to be distributed proportionally among the basing countries. They would also want the timing of INF deployments to be kept approximately on schedule. [redacted]

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